



School Meals Payment and Debt Management

Introduction

This policy concerns to the collection of school meals money and the schools' approach in the case of debts arising when parents/carers fail to pay for school meals. Parents/carers will be sent a copy of this policy when their children start at the school.

General Principle

School meals must be paid for in advance. If a pupil is to have meals for the duration of the week payment must be made on School Spider before the start of that week or if the school is to accept pupils having an occasional meal, for example, if they have forgotten their packed lunch, then payment must be received on the day of the meal.

If debts are incurred, then the school budget has to pay for this. As a result money which should be spent on all pupils' education in school is used to pay for debts incurred by individual parents / carers. The governing body see this as unacceptable and request that all parents / carers give this policy their full support.

Free School Meals Entitlement

Pupils will not be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for, or if the pupil is confirmed as entitled to free school meals. If parents/carers believe that their child/children may qualify for entitlement to Free School Meals they should contact Lancashire County Council. As this allowance is a statutory right for qualifying pupils it is important that parents/carers make use of it.

The school is only allowed to provide free school meals to pupils where this is officially approved and the school informed by the Local Authority.

Procedure for Collection of Arrears

It is accepted that on occasion arrears may arise for various reasons eg pupils forget their packed lunch and a school lunch is provided. However, arrears cannot be allowed to accumulate. The governing body has therefore agreed the following policy where arrears arise.

1. A text will be sent on day 1 to notify parents that their child has had a school meal that day. Payment would be requested on School Spider to bring the account up to date on that day.
2. The parent/carer will be informed in writing when one week of debt is still outstanding and advised to make immediate payment (Appendix 1).
3. A final letter to the parent/guardian informing them that no meals will be provided for their child/children if payment of an outstanding debt has not been received by a specified date, (ie in accordance with the policy the date when one weeks' arrears have accumulated) (Appendix 2).

If you are having financial difficulties please discuss this with either the Headteacher or the School Office. In certain situations we may be able to arrange a payment plan to recover the debt, providing that it is a regular payment and no further meals are taken until the debt is recovered in full.

Once the final letter deadline has expired the debt will be passed onto the debt recovery team at Lancashire County Council where legal proceeding may begin.

Policy Created: 27/02/2019
Review Date: July 2023



APPENDIX 1



Date:

Accumulated Dinner Money Arrears

Child's name:

Dear parent/ guardian

Following the text dated _____ regarding your child receiving a school meal on that day, our records show that this has not yet been paid.

The outstanding amount to be paid via School Spider is £_____.

In a case when a debt payment is not received nor a packed lunch provided, we will phone to ask you to come to school with the money or to provide a packed lunch for your child before lunch time.

This debt needs to be paid as soon as possible please, via School Spider.

If you have any queries and/ or wish to discuss this matter please contact the school office.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

APPENDIX 2



Date:

Non Payment of School Dinner Money Arrears

Child's name:

Dear parent/ guardian

Our records show that you have not cleared the school dinner money arrears for your child/children despite the previous text and letter sent home on _____ and _____.

Arrears to date total £_____

No further meals will be provided for your child for any reason until the debt is paid in full.

In following the school policy on dinner money arrears, a copy of which is on the Tonacliffe website, www.tonacliffe.lancs.sch.uk, I must inform you that if payment is not received within 5 working days of the date of this letter, the debt will be referred to the LCC Debt Recovery Team.

I am obliged to warn you that the debt recovery procedure can result in additional costs and potentially a summons to Court.

Payment should be made on School Spider within 5 working days.

Should you wish to discuss any issue regarding this debt, please contact the school.

Yours Sincerely

Headteacher